

## *Preserving the Health of the Land: America's Conservation Challenge*

**USDA's conservation agencies are taking on the high-priority conservation issues facing the Nation's private lands.**

### **Water Quality**

Investing in voluntary conservation practices on private lands through a Federal, State and local partnership saved New York City \$6 billion in water treatment facility costs.

### **Forest Fragmentation**

Forests are increasingly threatened by subdivision into smaller and smaller parcels. Through the Forest Legacy Program, USDA works with landowners to preserve critical forest lands.

### **Urbanization**

Development pressures in the Chesapeake Bay region have reduced tree canopy from 51 percent cover to 37 percent in the last 25 years. State and Federal efforts such as the Urban and Community Forestry and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs are helping protect water quality, wildlife habitat and the health of the Bay.

### **Salmon Habitat**

Soil erosion has been a major factor in the decline in the quality of salmon habitat. Landowners have reduced rates of soil loss by implementing management practices, such as riparian buffers, and by enrolling in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program.

### **Farmland Protection**

In California, much of the Nation's winter produce is grown on land adjacent to rapidly expanding urban areas. The Farmland Protection Program helps farmers keep their land in agricultural production.

### **Nutrient-laden Runoff**

Nutrient-laden runoff from agricultural lands in the upper Mississippi River basin contributes to hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. Farmers are using USDA's Conservation Reserve and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs to keep nutrients on the land and out of rivers and streams.

### **Wetlands**

From 1982-92, more than 800,000 acres of wetlands were lost to development across the country. In the Everglades region of Florida, investments through the Wetlands Reserve Program and similar initiatives have helped to reverse this trend.

